

# **ISLAMIC EDUCATION: INSIDE VS OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE**

Authors: Basheer Ahmed Dars and Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf  
Presented at: 4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ARABIC STUDIES & ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION 2017  
(Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

# ISLAMIC EDUCATION

- What really is it?
- Two main opinions:
  - Opinion 1: Structured around 'CORE' Islamic Sciences
  - Opinion 2: Focus on contemporary issues related to Islam

# EXAMPLES OF FIRST OPINION ABOUT THE CONCEPTION OF ISLAMIC STUDIES



Madrasa Students  
(Courtesy: hiveminer.com)

Subject Areas in traditional Madrasah Curriculum:

- Arabic Language
- Fiqh
- Tafseer
- Aqeedah
- Hadith
- Usool Al-Hadith
- Usool At-Tafseer
- Usool Al-Fiqh
- Mantiq

# STUDY OF ISLAM FROM INSIDE

Islam



# A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

- Initial focus was only Quran and Hadith
- Commencement of language studies and formation of grammar from the time of Rashidoon caliphs
- Mass translation movement and commencement of studies of other subjects
- Transition from Masjid-based teaching circles to formal higher education institutions which used to offer degrees
- Emergence of Nizamiyyah madrasas
- Separation of worldly and religious sciences by Imam Ghazali/ Ibn Khaldoon
- Evolution of the core educational system while maintaining core focus on Islamic studies
- Separation between secular and religious study institutions
- Pressures from both sides (secular as well as religious) to reform their curriculums

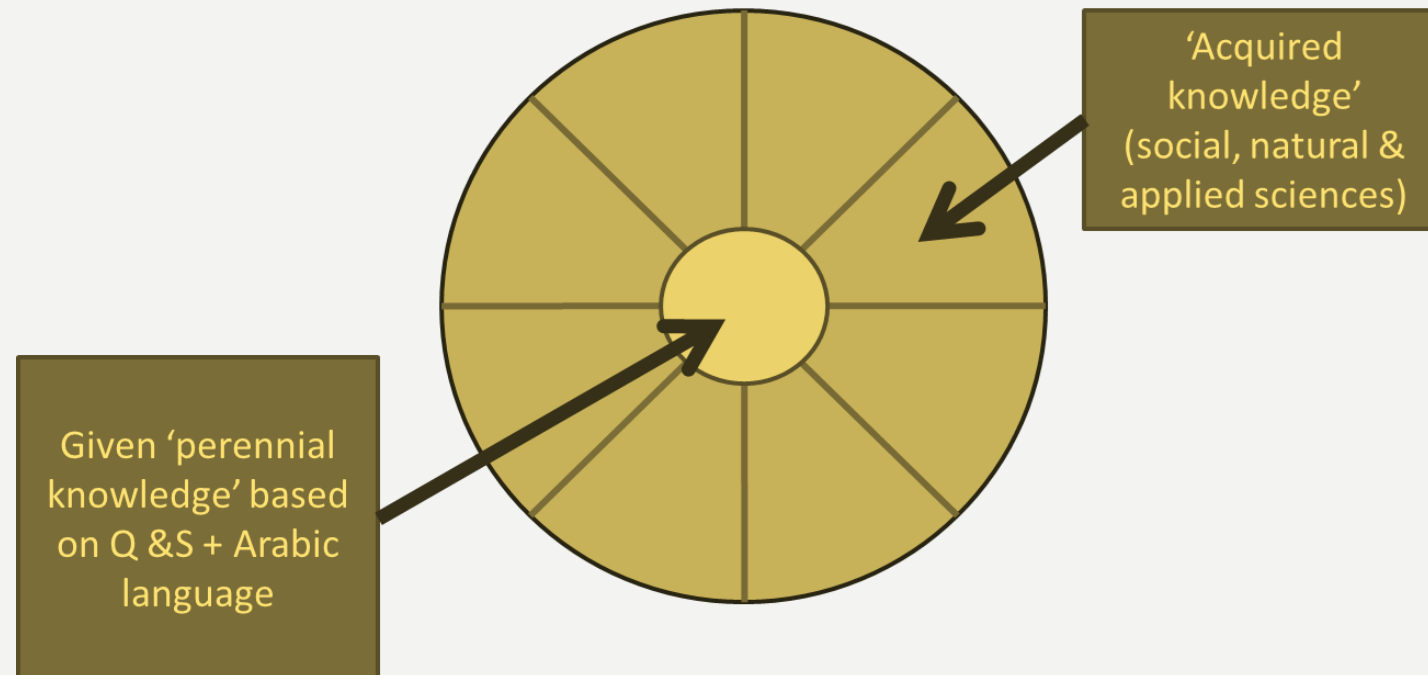
# DICHOTOMY IN EDUCATION..

- The dichotomy in education is often challenged by the reformers and revivalists like Maududi, Al-Attas and others. The need for reforms 'from within' were highlighted prominent scholars at the first world conference on Islamic education in Makkah, 1977 which was attended by 313 scholars from around the world. The conference gave recommendations from reform in 11 areas.

# CLASSIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Interestingly, the model of 'classification of knowledge' that came out of the conference proceedings is quite similar to our what we have proposed with a different conception.

The scholars who attended the conference emphasized the 'Islamization of knowledge' in Muslim countries to remove the apparent dichotomy.



# THE NEW MODEL THAT CAME UP AS A RESULT





# BACK TO THE WORLD OF TRADITIONAL SEMINARIES

Is everyone happy with the system of education in traditional seminaries?

Many people think that the traditional seminaries are fortresses of the Muslims, however, many think that they are in need of reforms.

What happens as a result?

People from within the seminaries as well as external critics continue to recommend reforms.

Interestingly, most of the reforms focus on adding or deleting certain subjects from the curriculum and very few focus on the teaching and assessment methods that can improve the educational outcomes.

# CORE OF ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS

Islam



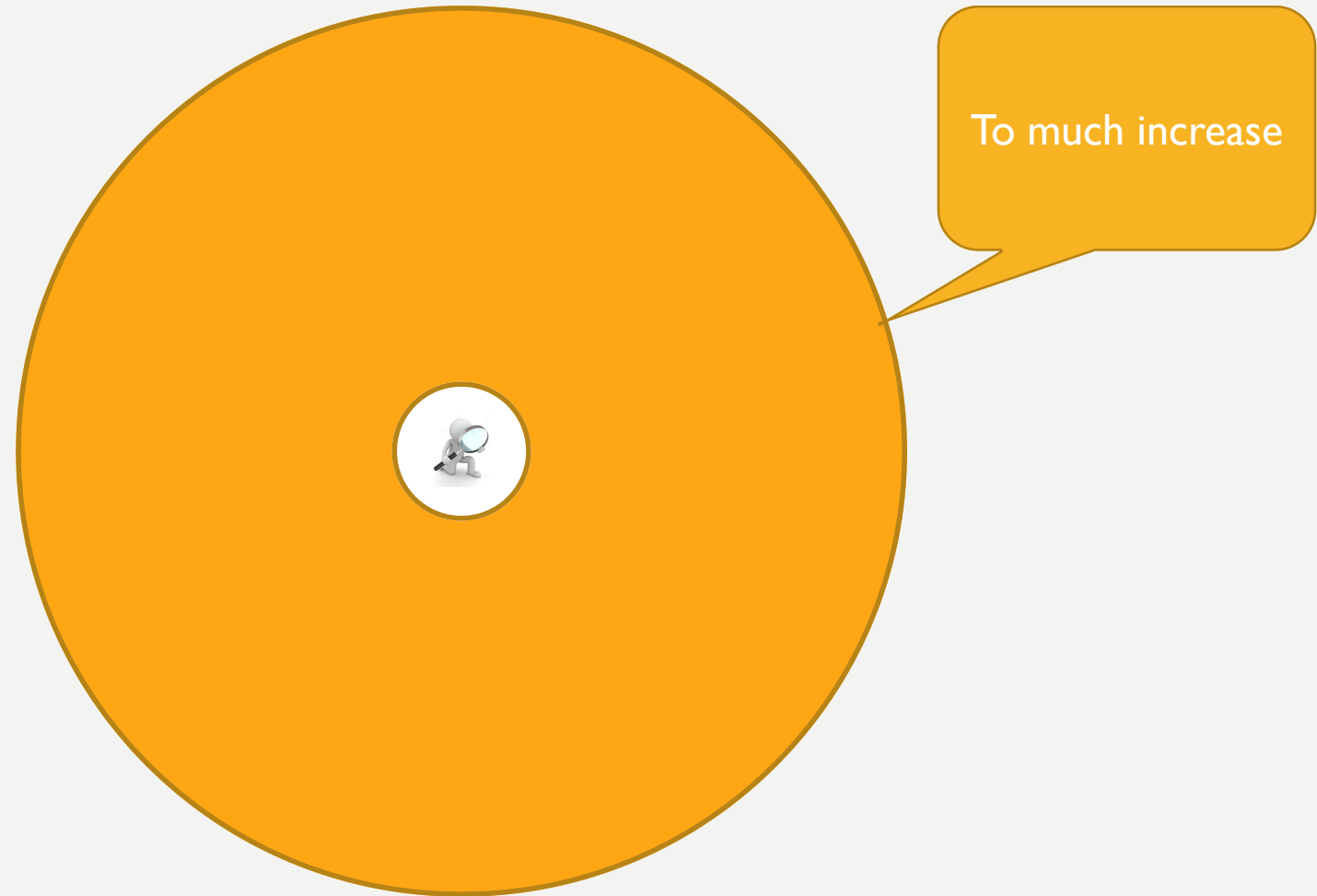
Additional  
subjects added  
around the core

# PRESSURES TO EXTEND THE OUTER CORE



Increased  
thickness

# PRESSURES TO EXTEND THE OUTER CORE



# LOOKING FROM OUTSIDE



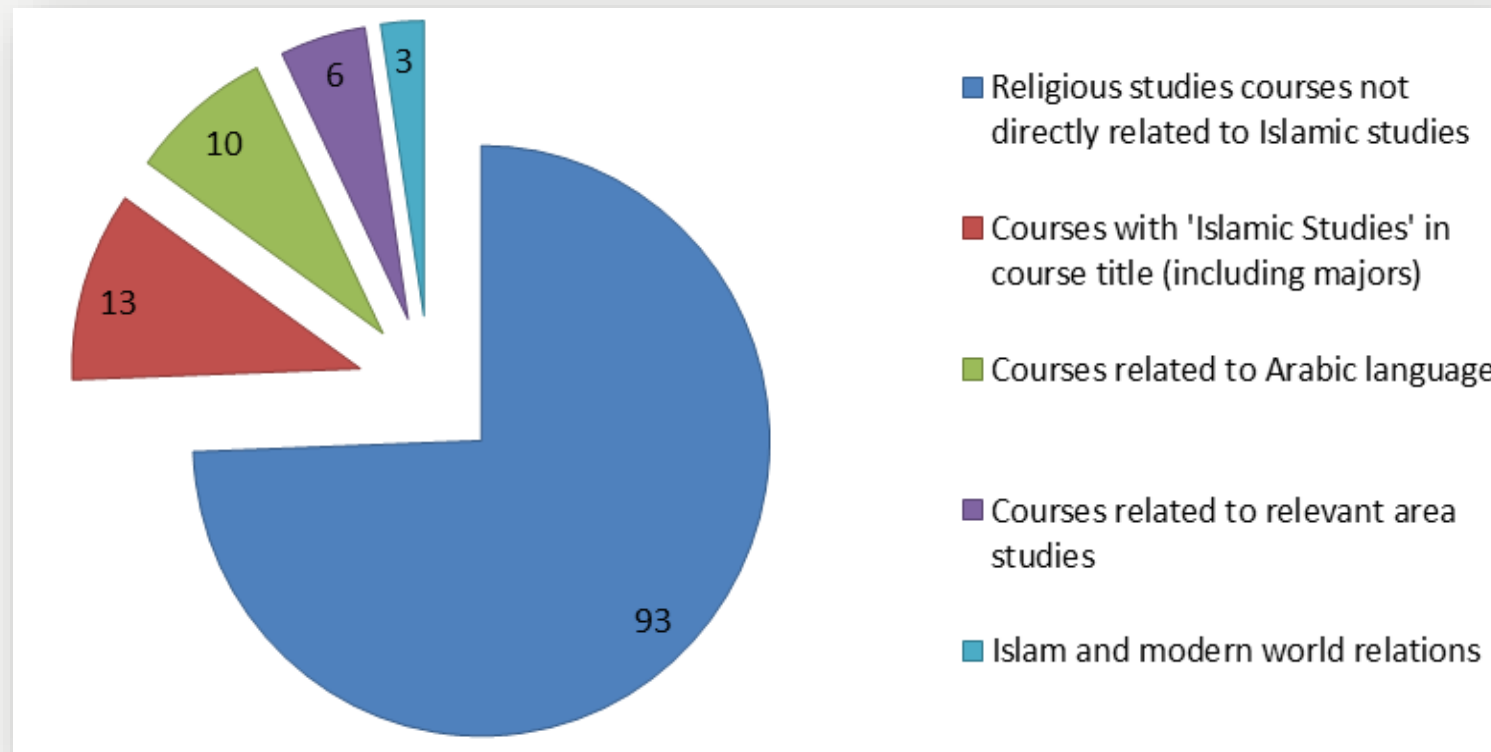
# ORIENTAL ROOTS

- The current system of Islamic education in west has its root in the orientalist studies of the previous 4 centuries.
- The trademark of Orientalist approach is:
  - The researcher considering him or her self superior than those they are researching on
  - Research is often done with non-academic intentions (e.g. missionary aims, finding faults, seeking governorships and other positions etc.) – *HOWEVER, this statement does not represent all the orientalist studies and a proportion of them were done with honest intentions*
  - The researcher consider the phenomenon or people being studied as *external*
  - The phenomenon being studies is considered to be fixed, unchangeable, or finished

With the above approach towards the research methods, bias or ‘intellectual pollution’ is inevitable (as it is highlighted by various researchers)

# THE CURRENT STATE

Now let us present the overview of the current state of Islamic studies in the West. For our study, we conducted a survey of 40 public universities in Australia to assess their offerings regarding Islamic studies.



# CONCLUSION

- In our study, we have seen a dichotomy in the educational systems within Muslim societies where secular and religious education systems operate in isolation from each other.
- Furthermore, there is a difference between how the Islamic education is delivered between the Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries.
- What we consider most important in this situation is to maintain a balance between the two types of sciences. By sciences, we mean all uloom al-aqaliyyah which may include technology, humanities, linguistics, medical sciences, and other branches of knowledge.
- Moreover, educational institutions delivering Islamic studies courses need to adopt modern educational practices while delivering holistic educational courses to Muslim and non-Muslim students.





Thank  
you.

# REFERENCES:

(For detailed references, refer to the manuscript)

- Ahmad, R., Hifazatullah, H., & Rahman, B. S. (2012). An overview of the curriculum of religious seminaries of Pakistan with its historical background. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research In Business*, 4(1), 829.
- Al-Khateeb, F. (2013). Al-Ghazali and the revival of Islamic scholarship. *Lost Islamic History*. Retrieved from <http://lostislamichistory.com/al-ghazali/>
- Bastavi, S.A. Q. (2015). *Currilum of Dar ul Uloom Deoband*. Australia: Australian Islamic University
- Khagga, M. F.-D. S., & Hussain, G. (2015). Assessing the perspective of orientalist scholarship of Islam. *Maarif E Islami Research Journal*, Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan, 14(2).
- Khir, B. M. S. (2007). Islamic studies within Islam: Definition, approaches and challenges of modernity. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 28(3), 257–266.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13617670701712430>
- Martin van Bruinessen (1990), "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic script used in the pesantren milieu", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 146, 226-269.
- Morris, P., Shepard, W., Trebilco, P., & Tidswell, T. (Eds.). (2013). *The teaching and study of Islam in western universities*. Hoboken: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.
- Nanji, A. (1997). *Mapping Islamic studies: Genealogy, continuity, and change*. Walter de Gruyter.